

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Sherer Applauds State Colleges for Welcoming Hurricane-Displaced Students



State Rep. Donald B. Sherer, R-147, ranking member of the legislature's Higher Education committee, today thanked the state's colleges and universities for opening their doors to students displaced from Gulf Coast schools by Hurricane Katrina.

Sherer has worked over the past week with leaders of numerous state colleges and universities as well as the state's 17 independent institutions of higher learning.

"I've called college officials to be sure they were doing all they could for the literally hundreds of Connecticut students who fled the Gulf region just as the school year was beginning," said Rep. Sherer.

"Many students and their families were just unpacking at dormitories and apartments when authorities urged people to evacuate immediately," said Rep. Sherer. "For all practical purposes, these students will lose the entire semester, especially those in the immediate Gulf coastal colleges."

"I heard of dozens of students from the Stamford area alone who had no place to go for the fall semester," said Rep. Sherer. "It is a great humanitarian gesture by Connecticut colleges and universities to help students overcome this disaster and continue their education uninterrupted."

Rep. Sherer added that colleges are able to offer some free or reduced costs to students, though financial details are still being worked out at various institutions.

"I applaud the colleges and university leaders for stepping up to the challenge and helping students find classes and catch up with the curriculum," Rep. Sherer added. "It is a worthy effort that will help the displaced students manage as well as possible under difficult circumstances."

Rep. Sherer thanked Gov. M. Jodi Rell for her strong effort in opening up state colleges and universities to the students.

Rep. Sherer spoke with representatives of Connecticut's independent colleges and obtained commitments that they would provide space in various classes and expedite admission procedures.

Colleges such as Mitchell College in southeastern Connecticut offered emergency admissions on a space-available basis to students who had enrolled for fall classes at colleges and universities in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Rep. Sherer noted that Quinnipiac University in Hamden allowed qualified students to register as visiting students. Sacred Heart University in Fairfield opened its doors to students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Rep. Sherer serves the 147th Assembly District of Stamford and New Canaan in the state House of Representatives.